

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module adapted to be removably connected to a node in a communications network and adapted to perform a primary function and a secondary function, the communication module comprising:

a network interface, wherein the communication module performs the primary function over the network via the network interface, the primary function including receipt of incoming network traffic via the network interface and performance of switching and/or routing operations on the received network traffic;

a first digital storage unit adapted to hold content pertaining to accomplishment of the primary function; and

a bi-directional interface, wherein the bi-directional interface comprises at least one optical interface and is adapted to provide a local wireless access to the first digital storage unit, the local wireless access being provided independently of the primary function, wherein the local wireless access enables the content of the first digital storage unit to be modified to change the primary function of the communication module.

2. **(Currently Amended)** A communication module according to claim 1, wherein the bi-directional interface is adapted to allow at least one of updating of data in the first digital storage unit and read out of data from the first digital storage unit.

3. **(Cancelled)**

4. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 1, wherein the first digital storage unit comprises a first register including status data with respect to the primary function, and the bi-directional interface is adapted to:

receive a request for status information; and

transmit a status report on basis of the request, the status report including data from the first register which pertains to at least one parameter of the primary function.

5. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 4, wherein

the first digital storage unit comprises a second and volatile register adapted to store information pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function; and

the bi-directional interface is adapted to receive at least one control command, wherein the bi-directional interface is adapted to alter at least one parameter in the second register pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function on basis of the at least one control command.

6. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 5, wherein

the communication module comprises a second digital storage unit adapted to temporarily store information pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function,

the first digital storage unit comprises a third and non-volatile register adapted to store information pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function,

the bi-directional interface is adapted to receive at least one piece of information pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function, and

the bi-directional interface is adapted to store the at least one piece of information in the second digital storage unit.

7. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 6, wherein the communication module is adapted to, after reset of the module, alter the contents of the third register on basis of the at least one piece of information in the second digital storage unit.

8. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 1, wherein the communication module comprises an access module adapted to allow access to the first digital storage unit via the bi-directional interface, the access module being controllable via an authorization unit such that the access module blocks access to the first digital storage unit via the bi-directional interface at least until an authorization signal has been generated by the authorization unit with respect to the module.

9. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 8, wherein the access module comprises an authorization sub-unit adapted to receive a pass phrase from a portable software carrier unit via the bidirectional interface, the access module blocking access to the first digital storage unit via the bi-directional interface at least until an acceptable pass phrase has been received.

10. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 8, wherein the authorization signal includes at least one of a unique identifier of the module and an address field which designates a specific module position within the node.

11. **(Cancelled)**

12. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 8, wherein the communication module comprises an identification unit adapted to indicate an active data transmission state upon reception of an authorization signal which designates the communication module.

13. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 12, wherein the identification unit comprises a first optical indicator indicative of the bi-directional interface being open for access to the first digital storage unit.

14. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module according to claim 13, wherein the identification unit comprises a second optical indicator indicative of data being transmitted over the bi-directional interface.

15. **(Previously Presented)** A method of communicating with a communication module being removably connected to a node in a communications network, the module being adapted to perform a primary function and a secondary function, the method comprising:

receiving an authorization signal in the module from a portable software carrier unit while performing the primary function over the network via a network interface of the communication module; and

exchanging data between the module and the portable software carrier unit via a bi-directional optical interface, the data including information pertaining to accomplishment of the primary function and being exchanged independently of the primary function,

wherein the primary function includes receiving incoming network traffic via the network interface and performing switching and/or routing operations on the received network traffic.

16. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15, wherein the authorization signal includes an address field which designates a specific module position within the node.

17. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15, wherein the authorization signal includes a unique identifier of the module.

18. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15 further comprising receiving a pass phrase in the communication module, the pass phrase being received via the bi-directional optical interface.

19. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 18, wherein the pass phrase includes a static segment.

20. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 18 wherein the pass phrase includes a dynamic segment, the method comprising calculating the dynamic segment in the portable software carrier unit and a central resource respectively.

21. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 18 wherein the pass phrase includes a cyclic redundancy checksum, the cyclic redundancy checksum being based on data which is to update the contents of a first digital storage in the module.

22. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15 further comprising updating of the contents of a first digital storage unit in the module via the bi-directional optical interface.

23. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 22, further comprising:

receiving at least one control command via the bi-directional optical interface; and
altering at least one parameter in the first digital storage unit pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function on basis of the at least one control command.

24. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15 further comprising:
receiving at least one piece of information pertaining to the accomplishment of the primary function via the bi-directional optical interface;

storing temporarily the at least one piece of information in a second digital storage unit in the communication module;

resetting the communication module; and

altering the contents of the first digital storage on basis of the at least one piece of information.

25. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 15 further comprising reading out data from a first digital storage unit in the module via the bi-directional optical interface.

26. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 25, further comprising:

receiving a request for status information via the bi-directional optical interface; and

transmitting a status report on basis of the request, the status report including data pertaining to at least one parameter of the primary function.

27. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 22, wherein the primary function is a first primary function and wherein updating of the contents of the first digital storage unit via the bi-directional optical interface changes the first primary function to a second primary function.

28. **(Previously Presented)** A communication module adapted to be removably connected to a node in a communications network and adapted to perform a primary function and a secondary function, the communication module comprising:

a network interface, wherein the communication module performs the primary function over the network via the network interface;

a first digital storage unit adapted to hold content pertaining to accomplishment of the primary function; and

a bi-directional interface, wherein the bi-directional interface comprises at least one optical interface and is adapted to provide a local wireless access to the first digital storage unit, the local wireless access being provided independently of the primary function, wherein the local wireless access enables the content of the first digital storage unit to be modified to change software and/or firmware used to accomplish the primary function of the communication module.

29. **(New)** A communication module according to claim 8, wherein the authorization unit is external to the communication module but included within or connected to the node to which the communication module is removably connected.